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CHURCHILL, THE ADMIRALTY,

AND THE

SELF-GOVERNING DOMINIONS.

By OUTIS.

Short Examination of Admiralty Intervention in the Sphere of Imperial Politics.

WITH A FOREWORD BY

H. W. MASSINGHAM.

PRICE ONE SHILLING.

LONDON:

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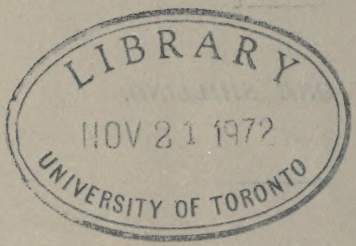
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FOREWORD.

THE following pamphlet is a clear and powerful statement of the case between the British Admiralty and the self-governing British peoples in regard to naval defence. It is also, and necessarily, an exposition of the true attitude of Liberalism, from which the policy of naval contributions is a departure. The history of that policy is divided into three chapters. The first chapter exhibits the Admiralty in an effort to press upon the Colonial Ministries the idea of a single Imperial Navy, directed from the centre, and fed by voluntary levies, in the shape of grants of money, men, or ships, from the Dominions. The second shows the breakdown of this idea, and the reversion, under Mr. McKenna, to the sounder conception of local Colonial navies, organised for Colonial purposes, but subject to the call of the Motherland in case of need. This, in brief, is the policy of co-operation, as opposed to that of contribution. It has the great advantage of stimulating the affectionate feeling of the younger British nations for the Motherland, while preserving their constitutional rights and responsibilities, and uniting payment and control. It also follows the general line of development of Colonial statesmanship in regard to defence.

The third chapter records a sharp and sudden reversion, under Mr. Churchill's guidance, to the almost obsolete policy of contributions. The results of this throw-back to conservatism and centralisation are before the world. It has dislocated

Canadian politics, reintroduced racial differences, and made a British Liberal Government appear as a partisan of one conception of Colonial responsibilities, which Canadian Liberalism repudiates, and an enemy of another conception, on which, before this dramatic intervention of the Admiralty, both Canadian parties were united. This is a lamentable issue. Readers of this pamphlet will find it stated with great moderation of phrasing and argument, and, I venture to think, with an appeal to principles which are innate in Liberalism. In practice, the reintroduction of the centralised conception of naval defence has already broken down. Incidentally, it has given fresh vitality to our dying differences with Germany; but this, we may well hope, is an incidental and passing misfortune. It is of far greater consequence to avert a breach of good feeling between the Motherland and the Dominion, and to secure, while there is yet time, a reversion to the wiser naval policy of 1909.

H. W. MASSINGHAM.

Mr. CHURCHILL, THE ADMIRALTY,

AND THE

SELF-GOVERNING DOMINIONS.

A Short Examination of Admiralty Intervention in the Sphere of Imperial Politics.

It requires no particular sagacity to predict that the last few years will signalise an epoch in the history of the British Empire. They will be remarkable for its rapid development in more than one direction. They will be remarkable for the progressive evolution and growing importance of a profoundly British institution, the Imperial Conference. They will be remarkable for the development, conscious and unconscious, of the distinctive nationalities of its constituent parts. And perhaps they will be remarkable, most of all, for what is at the moment and, superficially at least, their most striking feature, the determination of the Dominions to take up the burden which in our defective civilisation is the price of nationhood, and to share definitely and appreciably in the naval defence of the Empire.

It is indeed merely to record a fact to say that the Dominions have finally and completely awakened to this aspect of their Imperial citizenship. And people who profess to think that the peace of the world depends on the overawing of foreign aggressors by English omnipotence, have rejoiced in this fact, because they urge—no doubt rightly—that this "awakening" has made a deep impression on those foreign nations who supposedly contemplate aggression.

But the value either of this "impression," or of the "awakening" considered by itself as an evidence of political progress, cannot, it is obvious, be measured by the actual naval and strategical value of the armaments which the Dominions will provide. That value must neces-

sarily be small in the case of any given Dominion, or indeed for some time of all of them together; "it being ridiculous," in Mr. Churchill's words, "to tell us that one or two ships more or less make any essential difference, having regard to the rest of the fleet." It is not in strategic considerations that the value of these armaments will lie; it will lie rather, to quote Mr. Churchill again, "in the fact of these great new nations coming forward, with all their measureless strength and possibility, to testify to the enduring life of the British Empire"; a fact that "has already produced an impression throughout the world of more value than many Dreadnought ships."

It is worth while to emphasise this point. For platitudes sometimes conceal a truth; and although it may be platitudinous, it is none the less true to say that the moral value of whatever help the Dominions care to give us, is and must be much greater than its naval value. Increased gun power matters far less than stimulated consciousness of civic duty. And as a necessary corollary of this, it follows that the moral value of the Dominions' help depends in a direct way on the unanimity and the spontaneity with which that help is given.

It is the modest object of this pamphlet to examine recent naval history, and especially the incidents connected with Mr. Borden's proposal to contribute three Dreadnoughts to the British fleet, with a view to discovering, if may be, whether or not the general trend of events has been such as to justify the belief that the moral value of the Colonial "awakening," measured by these tests of unanimity and spontaneity, is likely to be proved by the effluxion of time to be as great as, in the first glow of enthusiasm, some observers—and not the least wise—had thought it to be.

I.

It should be said at once that if the argument below becomes either in form or in effect an attack upon the

present Chief of the Admiralty Department, there is no desire to be guilty of what may be called in a phrase borrowed from Lord Morley, "the vulgarity of counting him a deliberate hypocrite and conscious charlatan." There is no such desire or intention. There is only the desire to show that the enthusiasm that has in such a striking way marked Mr. Churchill's tenure of his present office, has had the incidental disadvantage of obscuring his appreciation of proportionate values, and has led him to commit acts and to defend himself by arguments which wisdom and experience should have led him to avoid.

Briefly the argument is this: that recent naval history, so far from serving to increase Imperial strength, has done more than any other movement could have done to disturb, or at the least to threaten, that ultimate unity of sympathies on which in the last resort Imperial strength must rest; that this unfortunate result is due to the temporary successes gained by the principle of "Imperial Contributions" in its conflict with the principle of Colonial "local navies"; that these successes may in large part, if not altogether, be attributed to the action, direct and indirect, of the British Admiralty; and that in this action the Admiralty have been inspired by motives which, whether or not they apprehend their full significance, they are at least unwilling to confess.

It is no exaggeration to say that, in the case of Canada at least, the unfortunate results which have been mentioned could most certainly have been foretold as the necessary and inevitable consequence of the success of the principle of contribution. For, although British opinion has only just begun to grasp its meaning, this conflict of contributions and Colonial navies is no new phenomenon. It has its roots some way back in Imperial history. There is, perhaps, no object in elaborating here all the historical considerations that are relevant to the issue at stake; but a just appreciation either of the present situation or of the Admiralty's attitude towards it, necessitates an excursion into the past as far back at least as the Imperial (then called

the "Colonial") Conference, over which Mr. Joseph Chamberlain presided in 1902.

That Conference was notable for many things, but for none more than that during its proceedings the two principles of Contribution and of Local navies first came definitely into conflict. The situation, indeed, had humours of its own. The Admiralty lent its benevolent assistance, and pronounced for Contributions in a memorandum which was a worthy predecessor of other memoranda that more recently have reached the same conclusion. The battle of Salamis, the Athenian expedition to Syracuse, the British defeat at Chesapeake Bay, and Napoleon's expedition to Egypt were all used to prove the worthlessness of local navies. They were further condemned, under the authority of Lord Selborne, as "a system which would be much more costly and less efficient than if the ships and men were provided by arrangement with the Imperial Government." The Admiralty, in fact, did not hesitate to be explicit; and all the "Colonies" obediently did what the Admiralty desired—with one exception. That exception was Canada, whose Ministers declared that "they were unable to assent to the suggestions made by Lord Selborne respecting the Navy." They desired "to point out that their objections arise, not so much from the expense involved as from a belief that the acceptance of the proposals would entail an important departure from the principle of self-government, . . . which has proved so great a factor in the promotion of Imperial unity."

Thus at the Colonial Conference eleven years ago the conflict was clearly and strikingly defined. And it is not uninstructive, in more ways than one, to note that this same Conference marked the close of a precisely similar conflict over the question of military defence—a conflict which ended, as the conflict over naval defence must inevitably end, in favour of local autonomy. Perhaps it is further instructive to notice the very significant words which Mr. Balfour used six or seven years later about this military

conflict. He was speaking of the unsuccessful attempt to establish a centralised Imperial army system, and he said: "Naturally, the soldiers desired that. They wished to know exactly what forces they could count upon in any given emergency. I believe that scheme to be impossible. I do not think that the self-governing Colonies would look at it, or that they would consent to it. It must be manifest that under the constitutional theories which we all hold in common, the Ministry of the Parliaments which raise, which equip, which pay, and which are responsible for the troops, is the Ministry which must control the troops."

But in spite of the lessons which Mr. Balfour gleaned from the conflict of the principles of contribution and local control in their military application, and in spite of the disappointment for "the soldiers" in which that conflict ended, the sailors went on seeking to accomplish that which they also "naturally desired." They still desired a single united fleet under the central authority of the British Admiralty, and they were still anxious that the Colonies should contribute to that fleet.

But at the Imperial Conference of 1907 they experienced an unexpected but rather significant reverse. Australia, whose contributions had been based and regulated on a written agreement with the Admiralty, and of whose statesmen Lord Selborne had said five years before that they "had led the way in the Imperial consideration of this question of naval policy," decided that the working of the agreement was neither satisfactory to their interests nor consistent with their status. They decided, therefore, to give up the system of contributions, and to build instead a navy of their own. It was a bold act: perhaps it is not too much to say it was a courageous one. They braved the displeasure and the expert omniscience of the Admiralty. They abandoned a course of action which is always certain to be attended by the unstinted applause, both public and private, of the recipients of their gifts. They adopted instead a course of action which must necessarily involve

not only infinitely greater personal trouble, but also infinitely greater national sacrifice.

But for a time, at least, their action appeared to be decisive. It was the direct cause of the subsidiary Imperial Conference on Defence which was held in 1909; and at that Conference it seemed as though a solution of the conflict between contribution and autonomous control had finally been reached. At that Conference arrangements were made with the Admiralty under which both Australia and Canada should begin to build up navies of their own, and should have definitely delimited waters, for the protection of which their forces should be primarily responsible. Provisions were, of course, made for co-operation with the Admiralty of precisely the same sort as had been made in the final solution of the question of military defence: standardization of armament, similarity of discipline, interchange of officers, and the rest of it. That sort of "co-operation" had been accepted as an efficient and admissible method of increasing the military effectiveness of the colonial forces: the same conception was embodied with modification of nothing but details in the naval agreement.

It was perhaps sufficiently important that the Admiralty and the two greatest Dominions should have been able to make among themselves this revolutionary and, as it seemed, conclusive contract. But the supremely important feature of the 1909 Conference was the complete conversion of the Admiralty from their former views. As before, they prepared a Memorandum: but it differed from their previous (and subsequent) productions in this, that it was not concerned wholly and exclusively with explaining the details of the intricacy and efficiency of Admiralty administration. This Memorandum was *sui generis*. It is perhaps worth while to quote its words: they are words for which Mr. McKenna may one day be gratefully remembered. "If the problem of Imperial naval defence," he said, "were considered merely as a problem of naval strategy, it would be found

that the greatest output of strength for a given expenditure is obtained by the maintenance of a single navy with the concomitant unity of training and unity of command. In furtherance, then, of the simple strategical ideal, the maximum of power would be gained if all parts of the Empire contributed, according to their needs and resources. to the maintenance of the British Navy.

"*It has, however, long been recognised that, in defining the conditions under which the naval forces of the Empire should be developed, other considerations than those of strategy alone must be taken into account.*" . . . Of course the fact was that nothing of the sort had ever been recognised before; and the change was fundamental. But he went on to speak thus of the then foreshadowed agreement: "Looking to the difficulties involved, it is not to be expected that the discussion with the several defence Ministers will result in a complete and final scheme of naval defence, but it is hoped that it will be found possible *to formulate the broad principles upon which the growth of Colonial Naval forces should be fostered. While laying the foundation of future Dominion Navies to be maintained in different parts of the Empire, these forces would contribute immediately and materially to the requirements of Imperial defence.*"

It is remarkable enough that the Admiralty should have gone out of their way to make this assertion about the immediate and material utility of the Dominion Navies: and it is an assertion which Australia, at least, has not forgotten. But the important point in the Memorandum is its abandonment of the insistence on strategical considerations only, and its admission that it embodied new broad principles of permanent development and growth.

That was a great achievement; and no apology need be made for quoting at length the opinion of the "Times" on what might have been an epoch-making document. Its views appeared on November 27th, 1909, and are quite explicit and free from reserve. After saying that we

had been "fumbling" for a good many years with this issue, and making no progress because of the "fundamental antinomy" between the views of the Admiralty and the views of the Dominions, the "Times" proceeded to discuss the political merits of the question. Speaking of the united Imperial fleet, it said: "It has long been evident that the maximum of power was not going to be gained in this way, because, as the several parts of the Empire advanced in the progress towards nationhood, the idea of a mere money contribution towards the naval defence of the Empire became, naturally enough, more and more repugnant to them. *It was evident, and perhaps it ought to have been foreseen by the Admiralty long before it was, that the further the several Dominions advanced towards nationhood, the more certain they were, sooner or later, to insist upon having navies of their own*—or, in Mr. McKenna's words again, 'while ready to provide local forces and to place them at the disposal of the Crown in time of war, they would wish to lay the foundations upon which a future navy of their own could be raised.' In point of fact, that wish is already taking shape in Australia and in Canada, *and we may well congratulate those great Dominions on their achievement in having at last educated the Admiralty up to their own point of view.*"

Probably everyone else who had thought seriously about the matter would have agreed with the "Times" in 1909 that the Dominions, by "educating the Admiralty up to their own point of view," had at last found a "solution" of the problem with which we had been "fumbling" so long. In other words, the conflict of principles seemed almost over, and the principle of contribution seemed almost dead.

There was, indeed, the attitude of South Africa and of New Zealand still to be considered. But South Africa was then almost on the point of achieving the Union: and until that was effected it was manifestly impossible for her ministers to make any final decision of policy. Even at

that time, however, there were signs that United South Africa was far more likely to adopt a local navy as a permanent policy than to continue her previous practice of making contributions; and, as will appear later, those signs have been supported by the evidence of subsequent events.

The case of New Zealand was, however, different; because, in 1909, New Zealand had taken the bold step of offering a Dreadnought to the Imperial Government. That was an exceptional act, and a very great testimony to the vitality of the principle of contribution.

But perhaps it is not impertinent to suggest that its explanation was found in the proceedings of the Imperial Conference of 1911. For at that Conference Sir Joseph Ward, then the Prime Minister of New Zealand, proposed in definite form the Federation by specific Parliamentary machinery of the various autonomous parts of the Empire. There is a palpable—indeed a confessed—connection between his proposition in 1911 and his gift in 1909. He made the gift because he believed in a united fleet; and he believed in a united fleet as a result and concomitant of Imperial Federation. But the significant point for the present purpose is that the argument has been reversed. After the unanimous and unhesitating dissent of the rest of the Conference from Sir Joseph Ward's Federation proposals, there were immediately suggestions of changes in New Zealand's naval policy. It was openly said that, after all, contribution was not a great success, and that perhaps the time had come at which New Zealand might begin to build a navy of her own, to act in co-operation with the Australian fleet, which was then beginning to show signs of the success with which it has from its inception been attended. And the change in New Zealand's policy has been emphasised of late. In spite of the "emergency" which was the dominating factor in the causation of Mr. Borden's proposition, there has been a speaking silence about the second Dreadnought which in 1909 Sir Joseph Ward promised, "if necessary," to build. And, indeed,

only a few months ago Colonel Allen, the Dominion's Minister of Defence, thought it well to remark: "We may in time acquire the trained *personnel* to man our own ships for the protection of our own coasts." If the Conference in 1911 did not kill outright New Zealand's devotion to contribution, it at least dealt that devotion a shrewd blow from which it has not yet recovered.

This, therefore, was the situation in 1911, so far as the Empire at large was concerned. After a long conflict of principle, in which every possible consideration of theoretical advantage and practical convenience had been adduced and tested and debated; after an extended trial by every colony but one of the system of monetary contribution, that system was finally (so it seemed) discredited and abandoned. It was abandoned by those who had tried it on the express grounds always urged by those others who from the first had refused even to make the experiment: on the grounds, that is to say, that in its working it must inevitably be unsatisfactory, and that in its essence it was inconsistent with national autonomy and self-respect.

II.

A very few words must, at this point, be said about the history of the question in the Dominion of Canada, because a brief account of events there is essential to the proper understanding of the present situation.

When Sir Wilfrid Laurier refused at the Conference in 1902 to make a contribution, he was only continuing a policy that had been inaugurated by the great Canadian Conservative leader, Sir John Macdonald. There never had been any dispute over this really vital question. Nor was there any dispute, at any rate up to 1909, when the Canadian House of Commons passed a unanimous resolution in favour of a local Navy. Mr. Borden's words on that occasion are worthy of remembrance. "I am entirely of opinion," he said, "that the proper line upon which we should proceed in that regard is the line of having a

Canadian naval force of our own. I entirely believe in that. The other experiment (that is, contribution), has been tried as between Australia and the Mother Country, and it has not worked satisfactorily, in any respect." Similarly, Mr. Foster, Mr. Borden's very able Minister of Trade and Commerce, said, "The first and greatest objection which I have to a fixed monetary contribution is that it bears the aspect of hiring somebody else to do what we ourselves ought to do. . . Some time or other, no one can doubt, we must and will have in this country a naval force of our own for our coast and home defence."

So far, therefore, there was no lack of unanimity and concord on any question of principle or method. Nor did the progress of time reveal any rift apart from the "Nationalist" opposition to naval preparations in general—a factor which was of great importance in the Canadian political situation, but which is irrelevant to the present purpose. At the end of 1909 a bye-election occurred in Ottawa, at which an independent candidate came forward, making the one plank in his platform a policy of contribution. Both parties ran candidates against him: the speakers and the press on both sides definitely repudiated and attacked his views. The "Ottawa Evening Journal," a Conservative paper of high standing, said of him: "He condemns and opposes the idea of a Canadian navy. We think he is wrong; we think that the election of anybody on that basis would be a British misfortune." That British misfortune did not occur. Nor did it occur in the General Election of 1911. For it is undeniable that up to the time of that election, there was no means of knowing that the Conservative party would so astoundingly modify their views. Perhaps, indeed, the cloven hoof of that mysterious Federalist organisation, which is gaining fame as "Lord Milner's Kindergarten," had begun to make itself apparent. Mr. Borden had begun to make speeches about the German menace, and the necessity of doing something, and of doing it at once. He had

mentioned, indeed he had even finally proposed in Parliament, an isolated unconditional contribution of the sort which the Malay States have made. But during the election campaign itself the subject disappeared from his speeches; and neither he nor any of his friends said one word that could have led either the "ignorant electorate" or the most astute of political observers to expect that they would abandon the principle of a local navy. The principle of "Tribute" was at least as moribund in the Dominion as it was throughout the Empire.

III.

If one bears this history in mind, and if one is aware of the impression which the incidents of it have created on the public mind in the Dominions, it is difficult to imagine how Mr. Churchill came to make the following remark in the House of Commons on March 26th of the present year. "It therefore behoves the overseas Dominions," he said, "to make exertions of their own for the common security, whether by what are called local navies, or by what in the Admiralty view is more effectual, by additions to the Imperial Navy." With that somewhat cavalier pronouncement, he declared openly to the world that the Admiralty had forgotten the lesson up to which everybody hoped they had at length been educated; that, having forsaken the wisdom of experience, they were back again at the barren premises which Mr. McKenna so decisively rejected; and that they were, moreover, so thoroughly reconverted that the First Lord was now ready to proclaim on the housetops that devotion to strategy which in former years, and in deference to colonial susceptibilities, they had relegated to the comparative obscurity of unadvertised official memoranda.

It would probably be admitted by most people that, in view of the tension of Canadian opinion, the present is an unfortunate time to give unnecessary publicity to this devotion. But if the Admiralty had done no more than stultify

themselves by publishing their abstract affection for a doctrine they definitely recognised as inapplicable no more than four years ago, there might be cause for regret, but none for indignation. It is because there is reason for thinking that they have done more than this, that they have, by a series of acts—most of them, perhaps, under certain circumstances perfectly legitimate, almost normal acts—carried on a species of campaign in favour of contributions and against local navies, that this short review of their course of action has been here attempted.

One remark must be made by way of preface to what is about to be said concerning the incidents of this "campaign." The argument must necessarily—and no pretension to the contrary is made—consist largely of inferences; and perhaps in particular of the one general inference that a series of superficially unconnected events are in reality connected by the persistent fact of the influence, visible or invisible, of the Admiralty authorities. It may perhaps further be said that there are more grounds than can here be alleged for thinking that some of the more improbable inferences are founded in fact. But apart from such considerations, it is contended that these inferences, taken by themselves and reviewed together as a whole, do justify the assertion that the Admiralty has allowed itself to indulge in a conscious and deliberate campaign.

Of course, the gift of the "New Zealand" does not come into the account. A suggested explanation of that episode has been already given. Moreover, the gift was made when the Admiralty were in quite another frame of mind. The new epoch does not begin till 1912—a little while after Mr. Churchill's assumption of his present office. But, having ruled out the "New Zealand" from among the incidents of the campaign, there is perhaps no more point in adhering to chronological order. The connection between these incidents is purely one of the identity of influence which they exhibit, and does not depend in any particular way on temporal succession.

The first event, therefore, to which attention may be drawn is the gift of a Dreadnought by the Malay States. If there was one thing more remarkable than another about that gift, it was the alacrity with which it was accepted. To many people it seemed a case for the gravest hesitation, a new precedent which no Government would without long consideration create. Yet the offer was formally accepted on the same day that it was first voted by the Council of the Federated Malay States. This fact affords at least a presumption of previous knowledge of the proposed gift on the part of the British Government. But there are more grounds than this mere presumption, for thinking that the initiative in the matter came from London. Of course, it is, *a priori*, no more than reasonable to assume that some suggestion was made. The giving of Dreadnoughts is scarcely the sort of thing that native Sultans think of by themselves, even although they may receive with enthusiasm suggestions made about the matter by the Ministers who are there to keep them in order. But there is no need to infer on this particular point. A most interesting despatch sent by the High Commissioner for the Malay States to Mr. Harcourt on December 18th, describes in detail how Mr. Brockman, the Chief Secretary, first made the suggestion "some time ago," to the Sultan of Perak, that the Malay States were not doing all they might to assist in naval defence. This account of the matter gives peculiar aptness to a remark made recently by a certain critic: "Literally it may be true that no 'pressure' was placed on the Sultan of Perak and his brother chiefs. We do not place pressure upon marionettes and puppets. We pull strings." And really it is difficult to take any other view of what occurred. The suggestion, of course, would naturally be conveyed in an inoffensive manner through the agency of the Colonial Office. But the influence of a different great department of State is revealed by another part of the High Commissioner's despatch. Speaking of the moving of the Resolution in the Council, he says: "Although it was not defi-

nitely stated by the mover or the seconder," that they desired the vessel to " supplement " Great Britain's normal estimates, yet he was so certain of their real desire on this point that " I referred to this point when I spoke on the resolution." The Sultans had not thought of it, but it was tactfully and without delay brought to their notice. That is not the sort of suggestion in which Colonial Office dignitaries usually take much interest. They have had enough trouble in the past with matters arising from defence. There are thus reasonable grounds for thinking that the ultimate incentive—as incentive there admittedly was—came from the Admiralty.

The last step of that argument is, of course, only an inference: but it is an inference that exhales, as it were, an atmosphere of probability. And if the guess is right there, it is probably no less so with regard to the abortive offer of the Indian princes. That they should spontaneously have so far negotiated among themselves as to make a concerted offer of seven battleships is, on the face of it, an unlikely supposition. But happily, whether or not it was spontaneous, the proposal was born dead. Either in deference to the threatened explosion of opinion at home, or in fear of the use that would be made of it by sedition-mongers in India itself, the Government found some means to avoid prospective embarrassment by destroying the cause of it. It might well be desired that the Government had seen fit then to make it clear that they would no more indulge in such gifts from the native rulers of dependent peoples. But, unfortunately, they did not; and Mr. Churchill has been at pains lately to make it clear that he is anticipating more presents from the Crown Colonies. Such events as these do not help our reputation in the world at large; for even if they were spontaneous, it would be impossible to make the world believe it.

But perhaps it may be called trifling to endeavour to connect these incidents with Admiralty influence. However,

there is one more incident of the same " trifling " order to which attention must be called. It concerns South Africa.

It is by no means guessing to say that for some time the Admiralty have taken a keen interest in the course which the new Union is likely to adopt in the matter of naval defence. Nor is it guessing to say that the Admiralty would be particularly pleased if the Union decided to contribute ships. These two facts are perfectly certain. The Union, moreover, is known to be about to devote its attention to this matter. It is, therefore, not without superficial significance, at least, that the Admiralty should have decided that the " New Zealand " should early this year pay a visit to South Africa. Of course, there was no particular reason (except the general one advanced below) why the " New Zealand " should not pay a visit to South Africa. But, on the other hand, there was no particular reason why she should. The object of her expedition was to pay a visit to her donors—it being held that they should have an opportunity of seeing once at least what they had paid for—and then presumably to return to the task (which justifies her existence) of protecting us in the North Sea against attack by the second strongest naval power at its selected moment—which selected moment, if the selected moment argument means anything at all, may always be to-morrow.

Every day, therefore, that the " New Zealand " is away adds to our danger from this attack, if our danger is one that really exists. But in spite of this the " New Zealand " visited South Africa; and her sojourn there was made the occasion of national rejoicings. That, of course—assuming the visit as a fact—was a perfectly permissible, and even a laudable proceeding. It would be pedantry to deny—and certainly we have here no desire or purpose to deny—that such opportunities as these may, and usually do, bring home the facts of Empire to the popular imagination with extraordinary force. It was therefore not only natural but proper that the crew were entertained : it was equally natural

and proper that they returned the kindness. But the fact which attracts attention is that they returned this kindness, if not with unnatural, at least with abnormal fervour. It is safe to say that nothing on a similar scale in the way of naval hospitality has ever before been attempted. Continual facilities were given for whoever would to visit her, and innumerable numbers did so. Twenty thousand children, for example, were taken on board on one single day. A party of sixty members of Parliament were taken for a considerable trip. And, of course, there were not wanting Imperialist speakers to indicate the moral. As a " Times " despatch thoughtfully remarked, " The result must unquestionably be one of great educational value." Thus has the Admiralty reversed positions: it is now going to " educate " the Colonies up to contributions. In South Africa they met with that degree of success which no doubt they were able to expect; and it can hardly have been a surprise or a disappointment to them when immediately after this " great Imperial incident " a member of the South African Parliament moved a resolution in favour of an immediate gift to the Imperial fleet. Is it really so fantastic to insinuate that the Admiralty did not go to all this trouble and expense just at this particular moment in the interest of Imperial goodfellowship alone? There was sufficient of that goodfellowship before to give ground at least for the suspicion of some *arrière pensée*.

But enough space has been given to this expedition, and to the other incidents over which we may be accused of trifling. It will be well, perhaps, to turn now to the case of Canada, where there is more solid ground for misgiving, and evidence of a less inferential character that the Admiralty have been so actively interested in the progress of contributions as to justify the word campaign.

It is necessary to go back to the Canadian General Election of 1911. In that election Mr. Borden was victorious, but his majority depended on the adhesion of the Nationalists, who were pledged to repeal Sir Wilfrid

Laurier's Naval Act. With most of his party in favour of a larger Navy, but with an essential part opposed to any Navy at all, Mr. Borden's only expedient, therefore, was to temporise. The easiest method of temporising, and also, of course, the one most consistent with his previous utterances, was to say that he must consult the Admiralty about the action he should take.

Mr. Borden's necessity was the Admiralty's opportunity. This is another occasion where it is not altogether an unmitigated guess to say that they sent an invitation to him to come over and investigate the problem for himself. At any rate, whose ever was the initiative—and, of course, it is entirely unimportant—Mr. Borden came; and the Admiralty made preparations to assist him.

Mr. Churchill recently went out of his way to say that he "never asked for any particular scheme. When Mr. Borden left this country," he added, "I had no knowledge of what he intended to propose to the Canadian Parliament, none whatever." The second part of this remark must surely have been an error of memory on Mr. Churchill's part; Mr. Borden's speeches before he left this country had already made the main features of his proposals a matter of common discussion both here and in the Dominion; and some of Mr. Asquith's utterances at the time leave little room for doubt, when read retrospectively, that the British Government were actively cognisant of what Mr. Borden was intending.

But the first part of Mr. Churchill's remark is of much more importance than the second. It is very reassuring, especially at the present moment, to have his explicit declaration that he made no request for any given scheme. It is interesting to notice, too, that it accords well with what many of Mr. Borden's Canadian critics have been saying—that the initiative in the whole matter was exclusively his; that his policy has been determined by the party necessity arising out of the opposition of his Nationalist Allies to the establishment of a Canadian Navy; that the emergency

on which his proposals are based was the creation of his own imagination; and that the Admiralty did no more than acquiesce lightheartedly in a policy of centralisation, preparing in the most suitable way the figures and technical data by which his policy could be defended. But, on the other hand, it must be pointed out that this view of the matter involves attributing to the Admiralty an attitude of mind entirely inconsistent with their subsequent action, and especially with Mr. Churchill's present proposal to accelerate his programme. It involves, moreover, attributing to Mr. Borden a measure of political adaptability and a capacity for compromise which an Englishman at least is debarred from advancing as an argument. And it is further in direct contradiction with Mr. Borden's own account of what took place, so far as that account can be reconstructed from his speeches. For neither the political deductions of Mr. Borden's Canadian opponents, nor Mr. Churchill's declaration of innocence can alter the fact that the Dominion Premier came here nominally at least in favour of a Canadian Navy, and went back in favour of a contribution. Nor can such considerations alter the fact that, by his own implicit confession, his conversion was due to the great efforts which the Admiralty made to bring him to their views. From the very inception of the Parliamentary struggle which has taken place in the Dominion, Mr. Borden has based his whole case on the scientific intricacy of a great navy, on the insuperable obstacles to small-scale efficiency, and on the urgent nature of the emergency which the Admiralty disclosed to him. The Admiralty cannot repudiate his conversion, because admittedly his whole defence for it rests on the arguments he has borrowed from them. As he has said, it was only after spending weeks examining their organisation and discovering their definition of "efficient" (*i.e.*, able to compete with a European Navy), that he became convinced "that nothing of an efficient character could be built up in this country (Canada) within a quarter, or perhaps half a century."

The Admiralty, of course, have nothing to be ashamed of in having converted Mr. Borden by the exposition of technical aspects of the problem. So far as the staff were concerned, it was indeed, from one point of view, nothing more than their duty. But perhaps Mr. Churchill—whose office is, after all, a political office—might have remembered with advantage that this is a political dispute, and that it is a considerable number of years since it ceased to be a matter of strategical technicality alone. Perhaps it would be better for everybody now if he had seen fit to restrain the enthusiasm with which his subordinates expounded the dangers of German invasion, and the glories of "empty" Dreadnoughts; and if he had himself considered a little more the dangers of a political controversy in Canada, the bitterness and determination of which could be, and indeed were, from the very first foretold, and the glories of an Imperial unity that depends on mutual confidence. It might have been the path of wisdom not to press so earnestly the advantages of a system which was already discredited by a striking piece of political experience.

But even if it be admitted that the Admiralty were guilty of no fault in converting Mr. Borden, nevertheless it is unchallengeable evidence of the reality of their campaign. They admit that his conversion gave them satisfaction, and his speeches have implicitly revealed how hard they worked to secure it. And although, so far, they had perhaps done nothing that was not strictly legitimate, their campaign, so enthusiastically begun, soon led them into acts which were not only in excess of their duty (however liberally that be interpreted), but which were also beyond the limits of discretion which should be allowed to any British department in its dealings with a self-governing Dominion.

The later incidents in these dealings show indeed that the Admiralty, realising perhaps their indirect responsibility for Mr. Borden's policy, were also determined to assist in the fight for its adoption. Thus the assertion here

made is not only that the Admiralty have committed acts of a nature to influence Canadian opinion, but that they have done so in a conscious and calculated manner. The so-called "begging memorandum" of December last was, indeed, a sufficiently colourless document to exempt it from any particular charge. It merely embodied in a not very illuminating way the Admiralty view of certain perfectly well-known facts and tendencies. But in addition to and since this memorandum, there have been four other ebullitions of Admiralty opinion which must be less briefly touched on.

The first of these four consists in Mr. Churchill's famous letters written to Mr. Borden on January 23rd and 24th of this year. There is no need to dwell here on their indiscretion; it has already been pointed out, with the vigour born of bitter resentment, by Canadian Liberals. Mr. Borden asked Mr. Churchill for certain information of a technical sort, which he wished to use publicly for the purpose of supporting his case. Mr. Churchill's letters were obviously wanted, therefore, *ex hypothesi*, for indirect, and presumably also for direct publication. That should have given Mr. Churchill grounds for caution. But he was evidently in no mood for caution. In his letters, which he must have known were to be published either directly or indirectly (and it really mattered little which), he not only gave the information asked for, but he proceeded to elaborate in the greatest detail arguments entirely irrelevant to the matter in hand, but directed against Sir Wilfrid Laurier's amendment to Mr. Borden's Bill, which was then under discussion. That the Canadian Liberals—and a good many other people too—resented as an interference in Canadian politics. Englishmen of every party may resent it as an evidence of what the Admiralty is prepared to do in support of the policy it has fathered.

However, the fact that Mr. Churchill had so obviously overstepped the limits of what was fitting, and the fact that

his reasoning rested on assumptions hardly flattering to Canadian feelings, combined to defeat Mr. Borden's object in publishing the letters, and served only to stiffen the opposition to his Bill. Perhaps it was this which led to the second ebullition of Admiralty views—an ebullition that took the form which Canadian Liberals have from the first anticipated with most misgiving, the form of a direct request for Mr. Borden's Dreadnoughts.

In this connection it is useful to recall what has been our attitude in the past. It may be summarised in two quotations. At the Imperial Conference of 1907, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman said these words: "The views sometimes taken of the proper relations of the Colonies to the Mother Country, with respect to expenditure on armaments, have of late been somewhat modified. *We do not meet you to-day as claimants for money.*" And at the Conference in 1911, Mr. Asquith said: "Canada has never given us a naval contribution. And we have never attempted to exact one from her. Of course, we know our business better than that." These two remarks were merely reminders, so to speak, of an attitude we have always been most careful to preserve, and which at the present moment, beyond all others, when a great political struggle is raging over the question of a contribution, it was supremely important to uphold.

In the attempt to show that Mr. Churchill's recent utterances do constitute a departure from this attitude, a certain amount of importance attaches to some words used in his memorandum of December last. Speaking among other things of the vastness of Canadian sea-borne trade, it says that for the protection thereof, "Canada is dependent and has always depended, upon the Imperial Navy, without corresponding contribution or cost." That was in the clearest way an insistence on the fact of Canadian obligation, which at least makes the Admiralty appear as a "claimant" for something; and, of course, what they claimed was that Canada should do something to help in the

necessary work of naval defence. But Mr. Churchill's recent speeches have made it abundantly clear that if they are to do anything which in the Admiralty's eyes is "necessary," they must adopt Mr. Borden's proposals. This is what he said on March 31st last: "It is necessary, however, to make it clear that the three ships now under discussion in Canada are absolutely required from 1916 onwards. . . If they fail, a gap will be opened, to fill which further sacrifices will have to be made, without undue delay, by others." Moreover, to leave no shadow of a doubt as to the form which the Admiralty considered Canada's help must take if Canada wished to fulfil her obligations, Mr. Churchill, in his letters referred to above, had pointed out that although he would have enough men for Mr. Borden's three "empty" Dreadnoughts, and although, as he later said, he could this year lay down, if he wished, five extra Dreadnoughts (*i.e.*, eleven in all), and yet "there would be no difficulty in manning those ships when they were completed"—yet, nevertheless, it would be impossible for him to lend to Canada the men necessary to "co-operate" in early stages in the training of crews for Sir Wilfrid Laurier's two Dreadnoughts to be placed in Canadian waters. This was equivalent not only to a request for one particular policy; it was a condemnation of the other as serving no purpose which the Admiralty now regard as of value, although but four years ago they said it would "contribute immediately and materially to the requirements of Imperial Defence."

But if there were any doubt about the fact of this request, Canadian Conservatives have taken the trouble to remove it. They have been freely saying that Britain has "asked" for these ships. Indeed, for the last few months it has been almost the whole basis of their case. Its appeal has, of course, been enormously strengthened by Mr. Churchill's announcement that in consequence of the Canadian Senate's rejection of Mr. Borden's gift he is going to accelerate his programme. But before that

announcement Canadian Conservatives had expressed themselves quite explicitly. There is no need to do more than quote the following sentence from Mr. White, the present Minister of Finance; it is in itself sufficient illustration: "*England has said she needs these ships; we do not want to be in the position of refusing to give them.*"

But although it is possible to argue as above, that not only has a "request" been given, but that it has been given exactly at the moment and exactly in the way most calculated to create resentment among Canadian Liberals, yet the third evidence of Admiralty motives is one which should, we submit, cause still more searching of hearts among Liberals and Imperialists. That third evidence—and with the exception of some aspects of Mr. Churchill's recent determination to accelerate his normal programme, it is the last incident in the Admiralty's campaign to which reference will be made—consists in Mr. Churchill's announcement, in his speech on the naval estimates on March 26th of this year, of the Admiralty's proposal to establish at Gibraltar an "Imperial Squadron" composed of the Dominion ships.

Curiously enough, it has never yet been asked why that announcement was made just when it was made. Yet, obviously, it is a matter that needs explanation. It is impossible to regard it as a normal Act in the circumstances of the situation as it existed on March 26th. For the Imperial Squadron cannot at the soonest be created till 1916. And on March 26th one of its five prospective members was touring the world, as a preliminary to resuming its post in the North Sea. The order for the construction of the second had only just been placed. The other three were not only not yet voted: a great political party, representing approximately half a nation, was risking its very existence in the effort to prevent them being voted. With so long a time before the Admiralty's plan could possibly mature, and with such grave probabilities that it would never mature at all, to be considered, there

was apparently no technical, and certainly there was no valid political, reason why the announcement should be made just then. On the other hand, Mr. Churchill promised on March 31st that if the Canadian Liberals succeeded in making these three ships "miscarry," he would introduce a supplementary estimate. That promise he is about to fulfil: and the present point is that his action will incidentally give the British Parliament a direct responsibility for a part at least of his new Squadron. At the moment when the British Parliament assumes this responsibility would have seemed a fitting opportunity for the announcement of its creation. At that moment there will be a valid political reason for it: on March 26th there was none.

In the absence of admissible reasons of public policy, therefore, the sort of reasons which may perhaps be best described as motives become important. And the contention here put forward is that in making this announcement just when it was made, the Admiralty were actuated by two motives, neither of which was such as should be allowed to influence its action.

The first of these two motives, it is submitted, was the definite desire to influence Canadian opinion. It is obvious at once that such an announcement must have had a direct effect, great or small, on the state of the public mind in the Dominion. It was certain to be interpreted there—and of course has been interpreted there—as bearing on their own particular struggle. It must be remembered, moreover, that on March 26th the fate of the three ships was still hanging in the balance, and depended on the action of the Senate, a body which is not only admittedly peculiarly responsive to public opinion, but which notoriously had not then made up its mind about its course of action. But, of course, even in the light of these considerations, it is open to the Admiralty to say that they were only enabling the Canadian electorate to see Mr. Borden's proposition clearly, and to see it whole. If so, of course, that was an attempt to

influence Canadian opinion, and to do so by an unhappy method; but in its essence it was perfectly legitimate. But, unfortunately, to the partial mind—and especially to the partial minds on both sides of the Canadian controversy—there was another and a different interpretation. This interpretation may be expressed in two ways. One way is that which appealed to the "Times" as a supreme advantage of Mr. Churchill's scheme: "it concentrates the pride and zeal of the self-governing peoples on a particular battle fleet, which they will often see." If the "Times" was right—as no doubt it was—the Admiralty adopted a peculiarly subtle method of creating opinion in favour of vessels which were not yet voted. The second way of expressing the same thing is that the new scheme made Sir Wilfrid Laurier's determination to prevent the voting of these ships appear not only mean in itself, but disloyal to the British Government's expectations and intentions, disloyal to the endeavours and the sacrifices of the other colonies, and disloyal to the idea of Imperial co-operation, which Mr. Churchill so eloquently expounded. These two expressions—Mr. Borden's "pride and zeal," and Sir Wilfrid Laurier's "disloyalty"—are merely different aspects of an identical idea. Either of them might (though we do not think they will) appeal decisively to many members of the ignorant electorate; either of them might even have influenced (though, as events have shown, they did not influence) the ultimate decision of the Senate; both of them are emphatically the sort of consideration which should on no account have been introduced into Canadian politics at the present time. . . . That the Admiralty introduced them—whether through carelessness or by deliberate intention—was an act which it is impossible not to censure.

The second motive which, it is contended, actuated the Admiralty in making their extraordinary announcement is best explained by the following report of a speech recently made by Mr. Fisher, the Prime Minister of the Australian

Commonwealth. "The Government's policy," Mr. Fisher said, "is fully to co-operate with Great Britain and the Dominions in reaching a proper understanding concerning the protection of British interests in the Pacific. Therefore the Government has suggested a Dominion Conference in Australia, New Zealand, or Canada; the consideration of which is deferred till later in the year."

This was not the first time that the desire for this Conference had found expression. But it had not met—nor has it yet met—with what could be called an enthusiastic reception by the Admiralty officials. Their only reply to it is this announcement, made by Mr. Churchill on March 26th, that the Imperial Squadron will be stationed at Gibraltar; from where, as Mr. Churchill strikingly pointed out, it can reach Cape Town in two weeks, Hong Kong in three weeks, Vancouver in twenty-three days, Sydney in twenty-eight days, New Zealand in thirty-two days; so that it will thus be ready for any sudden emergency in the Pacific; ready, for example, for Japan's "selected moment."

Really, Mr. Churchill might have spared himself the trouble of publishing these figures. They are not calculated to make the Dominions any more likely to contemplate with equanimity the placing of this Imperial Squadron at Gibraltar. British Columbians—whose one fixed and immovable political idea is the fear of a sudden attack by Japan—will not care much for a fleet that is habitually twenty-three days away. And, indeed, the opposition of the Dominions to this proposal began immediately to be felt. Mr. Fisher's speech, quoted above, was delivered after the First Lord's announcement of his new Imperial scheme; and yet it contained no reference to it. That can hardly have been an accident. And Colonel Allen, the New Zealand Minister for Defence, lost no time in expressing his opinion. "The choice of Gibraltar as the base of an Imperial Squadron," he said, "does not satisfy me from the point of view of the defence of

New Zealand, and I feel sure it will not satisfy Australia either. . . . Mr. Churchill points out that the squadron from Gibraltar could reach any outlying portion of the Empire more quickly than any other European force. But we do not fear any European force. That is the crux of the matter."

IV.

The contention here put forward is, of course, that the Admiralty were perfectly well aware that any Conference such as Mr. Fisher suggested would probably offer determined opposition to the proposal to station the Imperial squadron at Gibraltar. Therefore, having already decided that Gibraltar was the proper place for it to be stationed, they resolved to "score off" the Dominions by announcing their scheme first, and making its acceptance a presupposed fact, on the basis of which the Conference might deliberate. And the grounds upon which this inference is made are greatly strengthened, if account is taken of the solemn reflections with which anyone must be filled who examines in detail some of the things which Mr. Churchill has of late been saying about standards of security.

When Mr. Churchill was called upon to deal with what he called the "fuliginous dilemma" presented by people who say, either that his 60 per cent. standard of superiority is insufficient, or else that the Dominion ships, being additional to it, are redundant, he took occasion to repudiate, in form at least, an ancient Admiralty dogma. The Admiralty used to insist—it was their main argument against local navies—that it was useless to try and distinguish between the needs of the whole Empire and the needs of any part of it. Mr. Churchill disposed of his fuliginous dilemma by declaring that the Dominion ships of his Imperial Squadron were additional to the requirements of "the European standard of 60 per cent. which we in this island find it convenient to follow"; but that they were "not additional to

the whole world requirements of the British Empire," as distinct from the needs of Great Britain.

If, therefore, this Imperial Squadron is additional to the needs of Great Britain, and if it is concerned merely with the rest of the Empire, it is fair to ask why its station should so summarily have been settled without consultation with those who were (on March 26th) prospectively providing its ships, and whom it was designed to protect, when it was known that they were anxious—had indeed already asked—to be consulted on the point. It is an act which requires explanation. And the only explanation which it is possible to give is that which will here be put forward, and which results from the geographical fact that Gibraltar is conveniently close both to the North Sea, and to the naval bases of the allies of the German Empire.

This conclusion is the natural outcome of an attempt to discover the real meaning of the sixty per cent. standard of superiority which Mr. Churchill some time ago invented. If one collects together the conflicting things that he has said about it, that standard seems to be devoid of any meaning whatsoever. In the first place, he has promised the Pacifists, not once but often, to make it the basis of negotiations with Germany to restrict the rate of building. And yet, in spite of this—and surely it is inconsistent—he is at great pains to prove to the Navy League that he will always have large margins above his standard—margins so large that he told them it was really an 80 per cent. and not a 60 per cent. standard at all. On the one hand, he says that 60 per cent. superiority is the standard which we need as against Germany for our own particular insular requirements. On the other hand, and almost with the same breath, he declares that 50 per cent. superiority is all that is needed in home waters, and that one-sixth of the margin is therefore available for "foreign service and the general service of the Empire." The 60 per cent. superiority is essential to our insular European needs, and yet one-sixth of it is available elsewhere, is in other words in exactly the same position as

the Dominion ships would be in at Gibraltar. What we are concerned here to show is perhaps best expressed by the converse of this proposition—that the Dominion ships at Gibraltar would be really in the same position as not only one-sixth, but the whole of the 60 per cent. superiority.

For although all this seems a sufficiently complicated muddle, especially when it is remembered that the 60 per cent. standard has been made the basis of definite proposals to Germany to check the building of ships, yet when it is considered in connection with this proposal to establish a great new squadron at Gibraltar in addition to the 60 per cent. standard, the situation touches the ludicrous. Gibraltar is so near England that it is in effect home waters; at least, it is European waters; and any ships established there are ships which Germany, in forecasting her programme, must consider. And if the 60 per cent. standard really meant anything on the basis of which Germany could be expected to regulate her building, it would involve logically the condition that no vessels stationed near enough England to be of immediate, and, so to speak, "insular," assistance, would be used in time of war. That, of course, is preposterous; if the ships were there, they would fight; and accordingly, the determination of the Admiralty, to station this great new squadron at Gibraltar, made Mr. Churchill's recent proposal for a naval holiday radically different, to say the least, from anything he had previously suggested.

Mr. Churchill was, indeed, aware that his attitude on this particular point required defence. And this is how he defended the building of these vessels in addition to the 60 per cent. standard. "It could never be supposed," he said, "that the naval development of the Dominions or of the great possessions of the Crown overseas, could be restricted or discouraged on account of any European standard which we in this island found it convenient for the time being to follow. They, too, like us, must remain absolutely free. It is for them to choose the method of their

naval developments, and it is for them to choose also whether any naval forces which they may call into being with our aid, shall be in addition to the British standards, or whether they shall be contributions in aid of the heavy burden now borne by the British taxpayer."

His explicit defence, therefore, for departing from the standard which the British taxpayer can be expected to support at the very time when he is proposing a naval holiday on the basis of that standard, was definitely that it was impossible to limit the Dominion's freedom by a European standard. His position was perfectly clear: and yet, within a few days of putting forward this rather striking argument, Mr. Churchill announced to the world that if the Canadian ships "miscarried," the British taxpayer would replace them; if this development which we must not in justice hamper, failed to develop, we would achieve for ourselves the results it would have achieved.

Mr. Churchill's two speeches, therefore, delivered on March 26th and 31st, when read together, make him appear either supremely careless or somewhat disingenuous. But even so, they do not quite represent the whole of the carelessness or disingenuousness involved. For if the Canadian ships "miscarry," we shall replace them, even if Canada utilises the freedom we must allow her to further her naval development to any degree in ways other than that which the Admiralty desire. That is proved beyond doubt by the fact noted above that although the Admiralty can find enough men for Mr. Borden to man three "empty" Dreadnoughts to be placed at Gibraltar, they cannot find enough men even to "co-operate" in manning two for Sir Wilfrid Laurier. The palpable meaning of which (quite apart from the evidence of subsequent events) is that we shall build the three ships for Gibraltar, however many ships Canada may decide to place in the Pacific for the protection of Imperial welfare there. And, what is more, we shall build these ships in spite of the fact that Mr. Churchill has admitted in the clearest language that there are as yet no

"new naval developments in the Mediterranean" which could lead us to desert our 60 per cent. standard of superiority. Neither the needs of the Pacific nor those of the Mediterranean, therefore, will be the generating cause of these three vessels if we build them. They will simply be vessels additional to the standard we require in European waters, vessels the existence of which Mr. Churchill originally defended by urging the autonomy of the Dominions.

No doubt Mr. Churchill would say that he was neither disingenuous nor careless, because his proposal for a naval holiday does not rest on any special standard, but would have to be a mutual arrangement taking into account all the facts of the time for which it was arranged. He has, in fact, used words very much to this effect. And that, of course, is a perfectly intelligible and business-like position; perhaps the only one which holds out much promise of success. Everyone hopes that on that basis he will be able to accomplish what the whole world ardently desires. But that position provides no answer to the argument that it is disingenuous to defend a departure from an enunciated standard by urging the liberty of the Dominions, when you have every intention of departing from that standard yourself if the Dominions decline to do it for you.

Mr. Churchill's argument on this point does indeed make one thing clear. It is by its very essence a confession that for every purpose except that of forming the groundwork of orations, the standard of 60 per cent. has been abandoned. Perhaps it never had a clear or even useful meaning; in any case it is now abandoned definitely, finally, and beyond recall. We are to build ships for European waters, which are not required either in the Pacific or the Mediterranean. That one fact stands out clearly from the muddled talk of standards; and it provides the key to the only possible solution to this tortuous confusion of conflicting arguments. That solution is that the Admiralty have determined that, at whatever cost,

Great Britain must pour out more blood in sacrifice to the Moloch of the German menace. If the Dominions can be persuaded, by means usual or otherwise, to provide the ships, that will save embarrassment in the House of Commons. But if they prefer their own methods of achieving their own ends, then the British taxpayer must prepare to be his own sacrificial victim.

V.

We have therefore arrived at what seem to us to be the ultimate motives of what has been called the Admiralty campaign. The process of reasoning, so far as it has gone, has, we submit, been carried out without saying anything which is not at least a reasonable and eminently probable interpretation of undisputed facts. But all the considerations on which are based our conclusions as to Admiralty motives have so far been deduced exclusively from the circumstances attending Mr. Churchill's announcement of his Imperial squadron. Their coherence and force seem to be very much strengthened by the reflections to which Mr. Churchill's latest pronouncement gives rise.

It might perhaps be thought that Mr. Churchill's mere determination to accelerate his programme in consequence of the Canadian Senate's refusal to sanction Mr. Borden's gift is essentially a matter of domestic policy, and as such irrelevant to the present discussion, which has for its object merely to discover the real efficacy of Admiralty endeavours to promote Imperial unity by the encouragement of contributions. It might further be thought that to envisage this determination as the last incident of the Admiralty's campaign is little better than a fantastic attempt to find in it a connection with the present argument which cannot possibly exist. And indeed it may well be that the domestic and the international considerations to which this new proposal gives rise are both immediately and ultimately of far greater importance than its possible

results in the sphere of Imperial politics. It may well be that its most serious consequence will be the difficulty of explaining to the public opinion of the States of the Triple Alliance why it is not grossly inconsistent with Mr. Churchill's earlier utterances, and why it is not a direct challenge to further sacrifices on their part. But in spite of this, it is possible—perhaps it may be said it is only too possible—that it has as well an aspect which is of Imperial significance.

In this connection, there are three things which it is important to remember. In the first place, it must be borne in mind that one of the conditions of Mr. Borden's proposed gift was that it was to be additional to the estimates which the Government would in the normal course, and without consideration of the existence of the gift, have laid before the House of Commons. In other words, the Canadian ships were to be ships which would not, other things being equal, have been built by Britain; they were to be in addition to, and not in relief of, British taxation.

In the second place, although Mr. Churchill's present proposal is only to accelerate the building of three ships by a period of nine months, it is, of course, perfectly certain that if, at the expiration of this period, the Canadian Senate has not changed its mind, he will then lay down three extra ships to do duty for the Canadian "miscarrieds" in the Imperial Squadron. That is a perfectly certain factor in the situation; and the real meaning of the acceleration is thus in effect a permanent addition of three to the number of ships which the Admiralty will from 1916 onwards have under their immediate control.

In the third place, it must be remembered that not only does this addition to the British estimates stultify the above agreed condition of Mr. Borden's gift, and that not only does it thus constitute a self-condemnation of repeated insincerity on the part of the Admiralty authorities, but that further it involves a definite and considerable change in policy which can only be justified by some explanation

which has not as yet been forthcoming. These three new ships are an addition not only to Mr. Churchill's earlier programmes, on the basis of which he proposed so definitely a restriction of naval preparations; but they are an addition to the programme enunciated in the supplementary estimates which he introduced as a result of the last German navy law less than a year ago. When Mr. Churchill was drawing up this programme he had, according to himself, no idea that Canada was about to offer three vessels as a contribution. The "miscarriage" of these three vessels cannot, therefore, be the cause of this newest change in the Admiralty's proposals. And it is difficult to see that it is justified by any new facts in the international situation. As was argued above, and as the Admiralty have been at small pains to conceal, it is not caused by new needs in the Pacific. And again, as was also pointed out above, Mr. Churchill, when enumerating the causes which might lead him to forsake his standard of 60 per cent. superiority, explicitly stated that nothing has as yet occurred in the Mediterranean which would induce him to do so. Some other explanation, therefore, than any that can be found in the facts of the present international situation must be sought for the alteration in the matured opinion as to our necessities which the First Lord put forward no more than eleven months ago.

There seem to be three possible explanations of this alteration. The first is one which was certain to be advanced by prejudiced persons, and which has indeed, in a tentative form, already seen the light: it is to the effect that the acceleration of programme is merely a method of leading up unostentatiously to the consummation of an arrangement by which Mr. Churchill has agreed to build extra ships for Britain on the condition that Mr. Borden will buy them back for Canada when he has control of the Canadian Senate; an arrangement by which, therefore, Mr. Borden is enabled to secure the object to which his party is committed without an appeal to the electors, and without

that delay which might prove fatal to his hopes. This suggestion has indeed been given some semblance of probability by some of Mr. Borden's recent remarks. It is, moreover, not impossible that the Admiralty are hoping, ultimately, to achieve the actual results of such an arrangement. But the assertion of such an arrangement as the explanation of the construction of extra ships which Britain would not otherwise build is both too manifestly unlikely and too discreditable to the parties concerned for serious consideration.

The second explanation is that which occurs naturally to the man in the street, and which is merely to the effect that the Lords of the Admiralty have "stampeded their chief," and using as an excuse the "miscarriage" of the Canadian ships, have induced him once more to make renewed efforts to add to the number of ships which Parliament is asked to vote. In other words, the Admiralty, as argued above, have determined to have more ships, and care but little how these ships are obtained. Having failed to secure them under the excuse of the autonomy and freedom of the Dominions, which at first they somewhat disingenuously urged, they have abandoned that excuse, and have abandoned with it not only every semblance of adhesion to their 60 per cent. standard, but also all adherence to any of the programmes that they have ever hitherto announced. In other words, according to this explanation, they have merely determined to get more ships for use in European waters; that is their ultimate motive; and to try to find other or additional motives is merely to waste ingenuity and time.

It will certainly not be here denied that the desire to provide greater armaments against the German menace is one of the "motives"—and perhaps the strongest motive—which has operated in the causation of the new departure. Such a conclusion accords only too well with the argument advanced above. But it may perhaps be urged, in addition, that another of the "motives" above distinguished has

also played a part not only in determining the form, but also in giving rise to the fact of Mr. Churchill's new proposal. That motive is the basis of the third explanation of this proposal which it is possible to give—an explanation which arises from the fact that Mr. Churchill's last pronouncement is in a very striking way exactly what most satisfactorily meets the requirements of Mr. Borden's present political position.

For Mr. Borden has so much faith in the efficacy of time that he has not altered in the slightest his determination to press forward his policy, in spite of his recent reverse at the hands of the Canadian Senate. He hopes, in fact, so to convert the public opinion of the Dominion, and so to concentrate it in favour of his policy, that the Senate will be compelled to submit to the obvious wish of the community. And the Admiralty, of course, hope too that his efforts will be successful; and their hope has in it so much of faith that their present proposal is only for the present to accelerate the programme, and later to lay down the new ships, instead of the (ultimately) cheaper method of laying down the new ships at once. And it must be pointed out that Mr. Churchill's pronouncement is calculated very much to assist Mr. Borden in his endeavour. In the first place, it is, of course, a testimony to the reality of the "emergency" on which Mr. Borden has so forcibly, but on the whole so unsuccessfully, insisted. It is possible that Mr. Churchill's words and action may have the result that for the first time this argument will make some impression on the public mind of the Dominion. It is also possible that his action may have the sort of influence which can, perhaps, be characterised as shaming the Dominion into action. In any case, it is a dramatic method of demonstrating that the Canadian Senate's action does impose fresh sacrifices on the people of the Mother Country; and from such a view of the matter it is an easy transition to that which derides the Canadian Liberals as mean and disloyal to the requirements of the Imperial bond. In short, Mr.

Churchill's action provides Mr. Borden with the very strongest possible weapon for the continuance of his struggle; and it is at least not unreasonable to think that in the causation of this new addition to our naval programme this consideration has played a part. Perhaps, indeed, the main part has been played by the mere fact that the Chief has been stampeded; but in the stampeding of the Chief this other aspect of the matter may not impossibly have had a share.

If this argument is right, therefore, the Admiralty's latest proposal is properly classed as an incident in their campaign. There appear also once more the two motives above distinguished, once more working jointly to dominate the Admiralty's cause of action. And always behind them, as the fundamental and unchanging cause, there emerges the inflexible but unexplained determination of the Sea Lords to have in European waters more ships than, in identically the same circumstances, and only eleven months ago, they deemed sufficient to meet the necessities of the situation.

VI.

Enough time, however, has been spent in the discussion of the facts of the Admiralty's campaign, and of conflicting probabilities as to the motives by which they have been actuated in their conduct of it. It may be well, perhaps, to turn now to the question whether or not by such measure of success as the campaign has already achieved, the Admiralty have really done anything to promote that Imperial unity which is the final source of Imperial strength; and whether the moral value of the material assistance they are seeking from the Colonies will, when measured by the tests of unanimity and spontaneity with which we started, prove to be as great as optimists might hope.

Enough has perhaps incidentally been said above about the spontaneity of the completed, prospective, and

abortive gifts with which we are here concerned. It is at most, of course, not a matter of coercion, but only of powerful suggestion. It may therefore be permissible to turn forthwith to the question of unanimity; and in this connection it is convenient perhaps to begin with the case of Canada.

By their ostensibly legitimate, though possibly unwise conversion of Mr. Borden, the Admiralty wittingly and deliberately threw Canada into what everyone could, and did, predict would be one of the sternest political struggles it has ever known. It was thus not only sacrificing absolute unanimity in naval affairs—such unanimity, of course, would rarely be possible if it were desirable, which it is not—but it was making the point of division a constitutional principle on which there could be no hope of compromise, and which would not disappear with the voting of the ships. Further, as subsequent events have shown, the Admiralty's action produced a struggle in which Mr. Borden is very likely to be beaten; and as a result of that, Canada will superficially at least be in the position of having made an offer, for which it gained the Empire's premature applause, and then having taken that offer back. She is indeed already to a certain extent in that position, owing to the Senate's refusal to sanction Mr. Borden's proposals. That in itself is an unfortunate situation. But by their subsequent and more questionable actions, the Admiralty have made things infinitely worse. They have embittered the struggle to a degree that must inevitably leave unfortunate results. Canadian Liberals are burning with indignation against Mr. Churchill, and against the British Government that he represents. The very smallness of his offence (if indeed it is so small) only makes its results the more alarming. Many people, hitherto regarded as sober politicians, have not scrupled to talk of separation as a possible solution, however undesirable it might be. The situation has not been helped by the fact that Canadian Conservatives have not hesitated to hurl across

the floor of the House of Commons the epithet of " Rebel " at the Opposition. The sort of thing that is commonly being said is revealed by the fact that a prominent French Canadian thought it well to write in the " Times " a letter in which he spoke of " the ships tricked out of the Malay States." This sort of thing, to put it euphemistically, does not make for the popularity of the Imperial bond. It is, of course, only an example of what is always certain to occur when any British statesman interferes (even without intention) in Dominion politics. As such, it is one of the best of the arguments against contributions. But its practical result will be that for many years to come the Canadian Liberal Party, at least, will be guardians of autonomy, jealous to the point of political pedantry.

But there is a still more unfortunate possibility lying latent, so to speak, in the present situation. It is indicated by the fact (which some people have pointed out in disparagement of his policy of obstruction) that Sir Wilfrid Laurier has behind him the representatives of only thirty English-speaking constituencies. His critics missed the importance of that fact. Its importance is that most of his support is French. And although it is true that on the present issue he would in all likelihood win a good many more " English " districts, and although it is also true that the whole of the " English " Liberal Party throughout the Dominion is remarkably unanimous in its support, still the main feature of the present situation is that—and this is admitted by the Nationalist leaders themselves, who do not love Sir Wilfrid Laurier—at the present time the French are absolutely and enthusiastically behind him. In other words, if the Dreadnoughts ever come across the Atlantic they will be followed, one might almost say, by the ill-wishes of almost every French Canadian. Of all things the Navy is the last on which there should be any race division. Yet it is only too possible that such a disservice to Imperial unity would

be the chief result of the realisation of the Admiralty's ambitions.

The campaign has revealed in South Africa a still more dangerous possibility of a similar kind. It has already been related how the visit of the " New Zealand " was made the occasion for the introduction of a Parliamentary resolution in favour of a contribution to the Imperial Navy. The important thing about the subsequent debate was that Sir Thomas Smartt, the English leader of the Opposition, so far sympathised with the resolution that, without actually committing himself, he said he hoped the day was not far distant when they would be able to follow New Zealand's magnificent example; while, on the other hand, General Botha, the Dutch Prime Minister, said that he thought contributions " would not be the best form of assistance to the Imperial Government. . . . He thought that possibly the country might want to have a small navy in its own waters, and if they went on those lines, they would see good results." Another Dutch Minister, Mr. Sauer, has expressed his " fear that the movement going on in different parts of the Empire (in the way of contributions) was not wholly spontaneous." It is practically certain that the whole Dutch population would oppose a contribution. If this became a political issue, therefore, the line of political cleavage might only too easily be confused with that of race. And, if the struggle became but half as acute as it has been in Canada, there could be no greater disaster either for the Empire or for South Africa than such a result.

As regards New Zealand, it has already been remarked that she has become restive under the campaign, to the extent of pointing out that she does not think Gibraltar a very good place for the Imperial Squadron. But Australia is far more outspoken than New Zealand. Her Ministers have from the first made it clear that they think Canada's new policy a mistake, and that they consider a seat on the Imperial Committee of Defence at least a doubtful, not to say a useless, privilege. And they have introduced a new

and alarming feature into the discussion by (as an Australian paper said, in summarising a speech by Mr. Pearce, the Commonwealth Minister of Defence) "in effect accusing Canada of tearing up the naval agreement of 1909," and so "backing out of the engagements" for the co-operative protection of the Pacific into which she then solemnly entered.

Political strife at fever heat over the relations of the Dominions with the Mother Country; bitter resentment by a great party against the British Government; widespread suspicion of the motives of a great British department; the possibility of racial divisions on questions of defence, with the "conquered" races in opposition to the self-styled patriots; inter-colonial recriminations and accusations of bad faith—these do not seem to the sympathetic looker-on to be distinguishing signs of a "movement" that will lead us up the straight and narrow path of Imperial unity to the goal of Imperial strength. They seem rather to be only the first results of a movement that is born more of panic than of patriotism; a movement that bears within itself the only genuine danger to Imperial unity; a movement that, if it be persisted in, may lead us down the path of mutual dissatisfaction to the goal of mutual disintegration.

VII.

It may, perhaps, be said that these gloomy reflections and prognostications are the flogging of a dead horse; that they are baseless, because they are based on a condition of affairs that will shortly cease; that, even if the Admiralty have been campaigning, it is a temporary aberration; that even if the Colonies have been contributing or talking of it, it is a temporary expedient. And, no doubt, in support of this contention Mr. Borden's repeated assertion that his policy is not a permanent one will with relevance be urged.

It is very important to examine whether this be so; and it may be convenient to begin with Mr. Borden. What Mr.

Borden has in reality said is merely this: that his policy cannot be regarded as a permanent one because, before the building of the ships can be completed, a general election must occur, at which, if they like, the Canadian people may return the Liberals to office. Incidentally, it may be interesting to wonder what the Admiralty would say if in the spring of 1916 they found the three vessels withdrawn from the Imperial Squadron by a victorious Liberal party. But, apart from this not unimportant consideration, it is perfectly clear that whether or not Mr. Borden's policy, if adopted now, would *necessarily* be a permanent one, yet *his* permanent policy, if he were returned again, would be to continue contributions with the justificatory intention of making them the excuse for Imperial Federation. That is perfectly clear. He has himself definitely asked: "Is there any need that we should undertake the hazardous and costly experiment of building up a naval organisation especially restricted to this Dominion?" And again: "We say that if we are to remain an Empire, we cannot have five foreign policies and five separate navies." These remarks constitute an absolute and unqualified repudiation of a Canadian navy, not only for now, but for ever. And in any case, Mr. Borden's Ministers have given him away. They have time and again made incidental remarks in the course of debate, which showed that their minds were full of Imperial Federation as the justification of a continued and permanent system of contributions.

There is even less doubt that the Admiralty desire both Canada and the other Dominions to adopt such a system as their ultimate and permanent policy. When he first announced his Imperial Squadron, Mr. Churchill said he was going to speak of the "general development of the Dominion navies," and "to indicate so far as it was proper to do so what is, in the opinion of the Admiralty, the best course for such development to follow." There is little of the temporary expedient about that. And he went on later to say that "the squadron could, of course, be

strengthened from time to time by further capital ships, or by fast cruisers, if any of the Dominions thought fit." He even went so far as to "ask our fellow-countrymen all over the Empire not represented here (*i.e.*, in Parliament and therefore at the Admiralty) to trust the Government not to abuse the great power placed in their hands." And, aware of the anomaly contained in this essentially, from a Colonial point of view, arrogant remark, he made a defence for it by extolling his Imperial Squadron as Imperial Co-Operation. "There is no more valuable principle in Imperial Federation than this principle which I am bringing forward to-night, of inter-Dominion action. The homely old tale of the bundle of sticks," . . . And he proceeded to repeat everything, even down to the homely old tale, that Lord Selborne said eleven years ago.

But the vital point is, that the fact of the existence of an Imperial squadron on the proposed basis was not eleven years ago, and is not to-day, Imperial Co-operation, as that term is used in connection with military defence and every other matter on which the interests of the constituent parts of the Empire touch. "The Dominions," says Mr. Churchill, "will be consulted by the Admiralty on all the movements of this squadron . . . and special facilities will be given to Canadians, Australians, South Africans, and New Zealanders to serve as officers and men." But the right to be consulted on strategical points is not control; and what good to the Colonies is a consultative right when the most important strategical point of all has already been previously decided in such a way that the Squadron will be stationed thousands of miles from their coasts?

It is a mockery to call that co-operation. And it is much to be feared that the efforts at co-operative manning will be no more successful. Eleven years ago Lord Selborne announced that he was going to make very special efforts to induce "Colonials" to serve in the Imperial Navy. He did so frankly as a justification of the contributory system. He offered then every "facility" that Mr. Churchill offers

now. Yet how many Colonials are there in the Imperial Navy to-day? Not very many, or their numbers would be known. But, on the other hand, nearly 1,300 Canadians have in the last four years joined the American navy, which is stationed near their shores; 1,800 Australians have in the last eighteen months joined the new Australian navy. There is only one possible conclusion. Local navies can be locally manned; but there will never be "co-operative" manning of an "Imperial" fleet.

Last, but not least, the Imperial Squadron is definitely, absolutely, and irreconcilably opposed to Mr. Balfour's principle of ministerial responsibility, which is both the source and the condition of the deduced principle of true Imperial Co-operation. While that is true—and it must be true until Mr. Borden's Imperial Parliament is established—it is a misuse of language for Mr. Churchill to call his squadron "Imperial." It is Imperial in nothing but the name which he has foisted on it, and in the money with which it is paid for. If the Canadian ships "miscarry," as it now seems in the highest degree probable that they will, and if they are replaced by the British House of Commons, it will lose yet another of the qualifications for its title. The only claim it will then have to connection with the idea of Empire will lie in the fact that it was conceived by a statesman who has in the past proved to the world that he understands the meaning both of autonomy and of Imperial welfare. But he has for the moment forgotten what he understands, and has so sacrificed the principles of nationality and self-government to the temporary considerations of European strategy, as to adopt a policy, the immediate results of which give some idea of the disasters which its continuance might entail. It behoves Imperialists throughout the Empire to reflect dispassionately on the dangers of the present situation, and as a result of their reflection to do what they can to avert these only too possible disasters.

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